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UNCLAS RANGOON 001544

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP AND INL
TREASURY FOR OASIA
NSC FOR BEERS
USCINCPAC FOR FPA
DEA FOR OF, OFF
MANILA ALSO FOR USED/ADB

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: SNAR BM

SUBJECT: MORE INFORMATION ON BURMA'S COUNTERNARCOTICS
PROGRAM

REF: A. RANGOON 1355
B. RANGOON 1415
C. RANGOON 1473

¶1. The GOB has recently released a bevy of information on its counternarcotics efforts, most of which we have reported in our previous cables (reflets). However, in this cable we are providing some new information as follows:

UN Protocol

¶2. The GOB has decided to accede to the 1972 Protocol to the UN's 1961 Single Convention on Narcotics Drugs. Once signed, this will mean that Burma has become party to all of the UN's major narcotics conventions, including the 1961 Single Convention, the 1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and the 1988 UN Drug Convention.

Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements

¶3. Burma has signed bilateral narcotics control agreements with all of its near and some of its not so near neighbors. These include agreements with China, Thailand, India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Laos, the Phillipines, and Russia. It is also a partner in UNDCP's six nation ACCORD plan of action in Southeast Asia and a member, with China, Thailand, and Laos, in the Mekong Sub-regional Cooperative Program against drugs.

New Destiny Project

¶4. During the spring of 2002, the GOB collected approximately 290 metric tons of poppy seed in exchange for winter food crop seeds and other support. According to the government, this is enough to seed approximately 40,000 hectares of opium poppy, and is the basis of its prediction that it will cut the area under opium cultivation in Burma from approximately 80,000 hectares to 40,000 hectares during the current crop year.

Seizures and Arrests

¶5. The latest figures for arrests and seizures indicate that the GOB has arrested 3,730 suspects in 2,529 drug-related cases from January 1, 2002 through November 15. During that same time period, it seized 1,737 kilograms of opium, 300 kilograms of heroin, 262 kilograms of marijuana, 9,191,000 stimulant tablets, and 1,711 kilograms of ephedrine. Most of these numbers are in line with previous years, though the seizures of stimulant tablets are well below last year's total of more than 32 million.

Martinez